

for education technology away from Skinner—for instance, by following trails blazed by Seymour Papert and the Logo programming language, where students learn to program computers rather than being programmed by them. She ends, “These practices privilege the much messier forms of teaching and learning, forms that are necessarily grounded in freedom and dignity” (p. 264). But for anthropologist Shreeharsh Kelkar, contemporary technologists are also committed to ideals of freedom and autonomy; it is just that they are based on a different theory of freedom. He argues technology designers are adherents of behavioral economics and its neighbors in the behavioral sciences, rather than behaviorism per se. Whereas the behaviorists want to condition people to behave correctly, the behaviorists see themselves as letting people make choices and nudging them toward making better ones. Kelkar wonders aloud in his writing if this is a distinction without a difference, but ultimately concludes that addressing the ills of technology in our society requires making an accurate diagnosis. If there are important differences between the behaviorist “nudging” technocracy of Cass Sunstein and Daniel Kahneman and the behaviorist utopias of Skinner, then those need to be interrogated in order to resist edtech’s unwanted advances.⁵

Teaching Machines arrives in a world where the pandemic has made education technology seem simultaneously more essential and more fallible. Distance learning, as millions of families have learned, can be pretty lousy, but it is probably better than no learning at all. The COVID-19 pandemic may prove a test run for a world wracked by a climate emergency. Schools will close ever more frequently in the face of fires, floods, freezes, and new pandemics and disease events. As the need for more computers, more broadband, more apps, and more connectivity in schools feels inevitable, Watters reminds that there are always choices and alternatives. If we recoil at realizing the deep connections between the edtech of today and discredited views of freedom and autonomy from the past, then we have the responsibility to chart new directions.

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Megan Blumenreich and Bethany L. Rogers. *Schooling Teachers: Teach for America and the Future of Teacher Education*

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⁵Shreeharsh Kelkar, “Are Surveillance Capitalists Behaviorists? No. Does it Matter? Maybe,” *The Startup*, Nov. 14, 2020, <https://medium.com/swlh/are-surveillance-capitalists-behaviorists-does-it-matter-no-and-maybe-a7327265eead>.

When a pressing social issue meets a poignant historical moment, the conditions are ripe for innovation. In 1989, Wendy Kopp, an undergraduate student at Princeton University, conceptualized and pitched the idea of an elite teacher corps that would remedy the “sorry state” of education amid the social and political tensions of the late 1980s. This elite teacher corps would forgo traditional means of teacher training, relying upon the strength of their excellent undergraduate education and youthful idealism to transform teaching and learning in America. The corps would be the panacea to the persistent problem with the quality of teachers in America. Thus, Teacher for America (TFA) was born. In *Schooling Teachers: Teach for America and the Future of Teacher Education*, Megan Blumenreich and Bethany L. Rogers tackle the persistent and pressing question of who is best suited to prepare high-quality teachers to teach students, especially students in underserved schools. The authors present a thoughtful historical analysis of the two primary models of teacher preparation: university-based teacher education and alternative preparation models, with a pointed focus on the ubiquitous teacher preparation program, TFA. Sustained by oral histories from thirty members of the inaugural TFA cohort, the text sheds light on the lived experiences of the recruits including what attracted them to TFA, their impressions of the TFA Summer Institute, their preparedness to serve as teachers, and the ways in which the experience shaped their professional trajectories and influenced their life stories. A cohesive presentation, Blumenreich and Rogers root their argument in an analysis of the social and political climate that made TFA possible, and marry it with scholarship on what it meant in 1990 to prepare a teacher for the classroom. In the book’s introduction, Blumenreich acknowledges that she is a member of the inaugural TFA cohort, and that both she and Rogers currently work with educators in the “traditional” university-based setting. The authors’ vantage points infuse the text with a panoramic perspective that results in a balanced narrative that convincingly articulates the dual powers of competition and collaboration to instigate the cycle of continuous improvement among and within all models of teacher preparation. As such, *Schooling Teachers: Teach for America and the Future of Teacher Education* delivers several notable surprises.

Teach for America is not the first organized effort that sought to remedy widespread concerns about teacher quality. The Higher Education Act of 1965 established the National Teachers Corps (NTC), a Great Society initiative and federally supported program designed to “recruit social reform-minded, liberal arts graduates into teaching at schools in poor communities” (p. 117). The text provides a critical comparison of TFA and the NTC, noting that while both programs were rooted in the idea that the purportedly poor quality of public school teachers could be solved by individuals outside the field, there are two critical distinctions between the programs: “The NTC engaged universities as partners with the explicit aim of making university-based teacher education more relevant and effective,” while TFA “largely ignored university-based teacher preparation, doubling down on the idea that training mattered less than the quality of the recruits” (p. 117). This idea encapsulates core debates about TFA, and as such, serves as a major point of attention and analysis throughout the book.

Chapter 1 offers an introductory historical account of the political and ideological climate of the late 1980s and early 1990s, effectively connecting the dots between the

“greed is good” ethos of the Reagan era and the subsequent resurgence of idealism and altruism upon which TFA was founded. Chapter 2 presents an explanation of how TFA fashioned its theory of action to recruit high-achieving young adults who would solve America’s “teacher problem.” The authors draw upon *life course theory*, the idea that individuals and their choices at a given point in time are related to their broader social context, to support their argument that the social, economic, and political climate of the era made TFA an attractive option to young people who sought to “give back” to the community. Chapters 3 and 4 give the reader a front-row seat to the eight-week-long 1990 TFA Summer Institute with firsthand accounts that reveal tensions and grievances about the content, quality, and perceived effectiveness of the training to prepare recruits to teach their own classes. Chapter 4, titled “Multiculturalism Run Amok,” offers especially descriptive reflections of the racial tensions that existed among TFA recruits, including concerns about the obvious racial, ethnic, social, and economic differences between most TFA participants and the communities they would serve. Chapter 5 follows the TFA recruits into their respective classrooms and exposes their struggles and cries for support. It is here that Blumenreich and Rogers begin a hearty historical analysis of university-based preparation programs and their efforts to meet the needs of teachers who are new to the field. The analysis continues throughout Chapters 6 and 7, where the authors consider the reforms challenging the educational status quo that have reshaped the field over the last thirty-five years, as evidenced by the ongoing battle between university-based teacher educators and the supports of alternate preparation programs like TFA.

Members of the inaugural TFA cohort held strong, less-than-favorable views of the 1990 TFA Summer Institute and the preparation program as a whole. The authors infuse the text with an abundance of direct quotations offering scathing reviews of the training camp as disorganized—administratively, organizationally, and substantively. One recruit reflects, “They [TFA staff] didn’t know what they were doing, and I guess the frustration is the privilege that you would think you and a bunch of your friends could do this without any grown-ups at the table” (p. 56). According to Blumenreich and Rogers, statements such as this serve as a “shorthand reminder that the TFA staff organizing the Institute not only lacked teachers or those with teaching experience, but, for the most part, consisted of recent graduates and classmates of Kopp’s” (p. 56). The authors acknowledge that there was a dearth of commentary in the interviews about the actual process of learning to teach at the Institute. They posit that “the pedagogical instruction that took place under the auspices of the Institute did not impress recruits enough for them to call up much in the way of cogent instances or examples” (p. 62).

Among the delightful surprises of *Schooling Teachers* is that it does not shy away from complex conversations about TFA and race. The lack of racial diversity within TFA’s ranks has been a primary criticism of the program both historically and in the present day. The authors provide a crucial historical context with regard to multiculturalism in 1990 American society by reviewing the “salad bowl” and “melting pot” metaphors of the time—an effort to define the cultural blending paradigm within the burgeoning atmosphere of political correctness during that period. In “Multiculturalism Run Amok” the authors take a deep dive into the problematic

racial and class dynamics that existed among TFA recruits and the communities they served. These tensions, according to the authors, colored perceptions of the organization's preparedness and suitability for its mission—leaving many recruits to make sense of how learning about their students' racial and ethnic backgrounds could help them make thoughtful decisions about curriculum and pedagogy. As before, the authors provide a wealth of interview data to support this conclusion. One recruit from the 1990 TFA cohort observed, "When you go to college, you hear white people say things . . . about people of color . . . and ask questions about your music, your hair, whatever . . . it just seemed really unfair to put these same people in classrooms with . . . [K-12 students] who couldn't defend themselves" (p. 86). The recruit continued by expressing a broader concern about Kopp's ability to pursue such an endeavor (e.g., addressing the needs of students of color in high-need communities) with a lack of awareness about issues of race and class: "The level of access that [Kopp] had from the world in which she grew up . . . is not a level of access that would have enabled a Black person to go and collect money in the same way" (p. 86) to address teaching and learning issues in underserved communities. The authors note that this statement reflected the views of multiple TFA recruits of color who were united by their feelings of difference—racially and ethnically different from most of the Corps recruits, and ideologically different from the TFA organization in terms of its values.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of this text is that the authors concede that there is no one-size-fits-all approach or elixir for preparing teacher candidates to meet the challenges of classroom teaching as both university-based preparation programs and alternate pathways have their merits and weaknesses. Blumenreich and Rogers help us consider the experiences of the early implementers of the first TFA cohort and juxtapose them with teacher preparation ideologies and practices of the time. Then, they guide us in understanding the evolution of each teacher preparation model across time and place by referencing and citing the work of teacher education scholars, classroom management experts, and education historians. This creative arrangement allows the reader to appreciate the nuance of personal stories while subjecting them to a scholarly lens for the purpose of gaining insight into TFA's unique historical moment.

Other studies have examined the experiences of TFA cohorts in retrospect. However, this study is the first of its kind to situate the inception of TFA within the larger historical context of teacher preparation—effectively exposing the inextricable interconnectedness of education, society, economic access, and political will. While Kopp undoubtedly had access to the social capital that would allow her to challenge the existing format of teacher preparation in 1990, perhaps the world of teacher preparation is better off because she did. According to the authors, TFA triggered an overdue revolution in university-based teacher preparation programs and initiated the charge to keep pace with the changing professional landscape. In turn, the augmentation of university-based teacher preparation programs over the past two decades has challenged TFA to enhance the content of its curricular and pedagogical offerings in the Summer Institute by partnering with traditional programs. Blumenreich and Rogers seem to suggest that the relationship between the two types of programs is one of interdependence. Nearly everyone has an opinion about

TFA, and this book does not disappoint in its appeal to anyone who is interested in the teacher preparation debate. Most importantly, this work reminds us that no one system has a monopoly on teacher preparation, and as times change, so too must the access to and modes of teacher preparation—whether one decides to teach for America, or just teach at all.

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Ellen Schrecker. *The Lost Promise: American Universities in the 1960s*

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“My biggest challenge has been shaping all this into a coherent whole,” Ellen Schrecker admits (p. 8). “All this” includes 130 interviews, several dozen archival collections, many histories of individual schools, and an avalanche of articles and books on the tumultuous late 1960s. Her research is prodigious—there are 131 pages of endnotes—and the scope of the analysis extends beyond the 1960s as Schrecker explores the aftermath of that contentious decade.

Her “shaping” highlights campus protests at a handful of large universities. The longest entries in the index feature Berkeley, Buffalo, City College of New York, Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Michigan, San Francisco State, Stanford, Wisconsin, and Yale. Opposition to the Vietnam War is the heart of the story, with six chapters devoted to familiar topics: “teach-ins” to debate US escalation in 1965-66, challenges to new military deferment policies, arrests for draft resistance, exposure of war-related research, criticism of ROTC (Reserve Officers’ Training Corps), and protests against napalm manufacturer Dow Chemical.

The freshest pages on those flash points spotlight school faculty. Schrecker not only shows the wide range of opinion (including apathy and indifference) but also follows moderates shifting to the left and liberals moving to the right. Those alignments often turned on how adroitly administrators and trustees reacted. Nothing in the early 1960s had prepared them. At that time, the occasional unrest—protests against testing nuclear bombs, taking loyalty oaths, and barring Communists from campus—was relatively brief, nonviolent, and never mobilized the dissenters to seize buildings or threaten the faculty. The improvisational response to demonstrations in the late 1960s is thus not surprising. The turbulence was “unprecedented, disorienting, and scary” (p. 340). There were few regulations or policy precedents for punishing or pardoning the disruptive.